Cultural Heritages: Migrating geo-histories and memorial landscapes between Po Plaine and Pampa Huméda

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Abstract

In the Bartoli-Melli family archive in Resistencia there is a picture of five men. They are all from Emilia-Romagna, and they sit in their co-operative building society office in Pergamino. The furniture is brand new, except from a portrait of a white bearded man. It is Camillo Prampolini, the evangelic socialism “prophet”, one of the founders of the Italian Socialist party. Under the frame, a motto: Uno para todos y todos para uno. The photo was taken on the very same day when the co-operative society Edilicia was established, in 1928. While Fascism was ruling in Italy, those migrants brought along with their working ability their anti-fascist culture and the socio-environmental heritage of the world they left behind: a social landscape shaped around co-operative societies and people’s houses.

Héctor Catarelli is an Argentinian-Italian whose family lived and worked in Tandil. Here the plain is called pampa lechera because of its many cattle and dairy farms. He still keeps in its family archive a medallion made in 1955 for his grandfather Juan, who was the president of La Agricola Ganadera. In the medallion we can read that Giovanni Cantarelli was, together with his brother Renato, the first to produce Parmesano cheese in their co-operative society, La Tandilera, founded in 1910. After only twelve years, they had been able to re-construct an agrarian landscape which was cognate to the one they inhabited in Italy: an highly irrigated lowland scattered with farms and dairy sites specialized in the production of Parmesan cheese.

These migration histories show how domestic landscapes have been inherited and revivified through embodied memories, labor, and everyday life practices. These transnational ecologies bring together places, socio-environmental practices and multi-situated identities. Following Mitchell (2003) and Armiero (2010) we de-construct these landscapes of labor and culture, linking a view from below (De Certeau, 1980) with a more-than-human analysis that underlines the relationality (Ingold, 1993) of these spaces.

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1 The Chaco province capital city.
2 Situated in the North of Italy, today it is one of the richest and most industrialized regions in Europe. Anyway, before the 1960s economic boom, it was a relatively poor and mainly agricultural region.
3 A mainly agricultural city situated some 200 km northwest of Buenos Aires.
4 Emilia-Romagna is one of the cradle of socialist culture in Italy. The first people's house was founded in Massenzatico, a farming village close to Reggio Emilia, in 1893, at the presence of Prampolini, future mayor of the city.

5 Juan is the Spanish translation of the name.

6 They arrived in Argentina on the boat *Provence*, in 1898.